DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 657 SO 025 327

AUTHOR Anderson, Dean Philip
TITLE Improving Parent Advocacy and Participation for More Successful Arts Education Programming in High School Choral Music through Political Involvement.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 43p.; Ed.D Practicum, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Boards of Education; Budgeting; Choral Music; Classroom Techniques; *Community Involvement; Concerts; Curriculum Enrichment; Curriculum Evaluation; Educational Improvement; *Extracurricular Activities; Fund Raising; High Schools; *Lobbying; *Music Activities; *Music Education; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; Partnerships in Education; Politics; Relevance (Education); Singing; Supplementary Education; Theater Arts

ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to empower a parents' organization through a unified effort. Primary goals for the parents' group were set. One objective was to defeat a small circle of politically astute students in the high school choir. In the previous year, those adversaries successfully influenced the school board on a parents' proposal for the choir. The director of the choir outlined areas of participation for the parents that included: (1) lobbying, networking and leadership skills; (2) budget knowledge and fund raising; (3) attendance at school board meetings and school activities; (4) assistance in concert and tour arrangements; and (5) daily assistance at the school. Parents advocacy increased from 40 hours per month from the previous year to 282 hours per month during the practicum implementation. The parents became exceptionally active and were successful in reaching their goals that included approval of the high school choir to attend a national choral competition at the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. where the choir was placed in the top portion of the nationally ranked choirs. (DE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 392 657

Improving Parent Advocacy and Participation For More Successful Arts Education Programming In High School Choral Music Through Political Involvement

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dean Anderson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

by

Dean Philip Anderson

Cluster 52B

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1994

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Alvin Pace

Fine Arts Department, Chair

Title

350 N. Arizona Avenue, Chandler, AZ

Address

April 15, 1994

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Dean Anderson under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

April 30, 1994

Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgiana Lowen

Georgiana Lowen, Ed.D. Adviser

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the parents of the Chandler High School students and to the singers of the chorus, whose quest to sing at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts became a reality. The families with a united cause and a driving ambition overcame obstacles to find a pathway to succeed.

Without the vision, dedication and commitment of the families, parent advocacy would not have had the impact in order to assist in making dreams come true for our children.

Giving parental perspective to administrators is crucial for continued educational reform. The empowerment of well informed parents was part of a balanced answer to problems confronting their school. The participants in this project demonstrated that their influence in an open, but discrete process led to a successful end.

Thank you to many community supporters, the Chandler Compadres, Steve McKinney of Fry's Grocery Stores, America West Airlines and the entire Chandler Choral Arts Association headed by President Dolly Wall, Treasurer Barb Hyman, and Funding Coordinator Shelly Sauer. Bless the children who sing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... iv

LIST OF TABLES..... v

ABSTRACT..... vi

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION..... 1

Description of Community..... 1
Writer's Work Setting and Role..... 2

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM..... 4

Problem Description..... 4
Problem Documentation..... 4
Causative Analysis..... 5
Relationship of the problem to the Literature..... 5

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS..... 10

Goals and Expectations..... 10
Expected Outcomes..... 10
Measurement of Outcomes..... 11

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY..... 13

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions..... 13
Description and Justification for Solution Selected.. 15
Report of Action Taken..... 16

V RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 22

Results..... 22
Discussion..... 26
Recommendations..... 29
Dissemination..... 31

REFERENCES..... 32

Appendix Page

PARENT SURVEY ON PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL..... 34

LIST OF TABLES

Table

Tabulation Form..... 23

ABSTRACT

Improving Parent Advocacy and Participation For More Successful Arts Education Programming In High School Choral Music Through Political Involvement. Anderson, Dean P., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Parent Advocacy/Choral Music/Choir/Political Action/Music Education/ Secondary/Arts Education/Community Involvement.

This practicum was designed to empower a parents' organization through a unified effort. Primary goals for the parents' group were set. One objective was to defeat a small circle of politically astute opponents of the high school choir. In the previous year, those adversaries successfully influenced the school board on a parents' proposal for the choir.

The director of the choir outlined areas of participation for the parents which included (1) lobbying, networking, and leadership skills; (2) Budget knowledge and fund raising; (3) Attendance at school board meetings and school activities; (4) Assistance in concert and tour arrangements; (5) Daily assistance at the school.

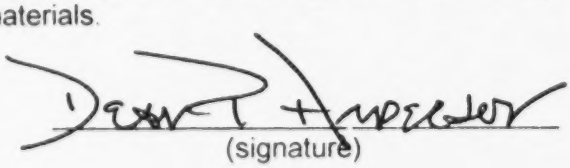
Parents advocacy increased from 40 hours per month from the previous year to 282 hours per month during the practicum implementation. The parents became exceptionally active and were successful in reaching their goals which included approval of the high school choir to attend a national choral competition at the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington D. C. where the choir was placed in top portion of the nationally ranked choirs.

****

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do (x) do not ( ) give permission to Nova Southeastern University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova Southeastern University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

July 5, 1994
(date)


(signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community was located in Southwestern United States and was a metropolitan suburban city of over 100,000 in population. The entire community over the past twenty years had been quickly transformed from an agriculturally based economy with small town politics to an industrial high-technology mecca and a resort/ tourist center with a progressive and visionary city government.

To the south of the community, yet within the school district, was the second largest retirement community in the State which had a history of overwhelmingly (85%) casting dissenting ballots for public education in bond and budget override issues.

Racial segments of the school community included: 72% White, 21% Hispanic, 6% Black, and 1% other minorities. The community was considered upper-middle class. It did, however, support a high rate of poverty within the minority population.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting for this proposal was a tenth through twelfth grade high school of 2,000 students from a district of 14,500 pupils of a similar proportion of racial division as the community's statistics. The school's governing board just a few years ago had set excellence in music education as one of the district's top ten goals and worked with the city government to co-support the building and operation of one of the finest aesthetically pleasing and superior acoustical performing arts centers in the southwestern United States. The performing arts department at the high school was one of five emphasis areas two years ago in the high school's recognition as the top high school in the State. The choral program under the direction of the writer has won numerous awards for excellence including recognition from the President of the United States at a private White House ceremony.

The parents (focus group) of the music students with whom the writer directly worked, represented a cross section of the parent population described in the previous section and had a high

interest in their children's musical experiences.

The writer was the Director of Choral Activities at the high school with the primary responsibility of teaching the choral music classes. The writer had held executive positions including president of the State choral directors' organization and city commissioner for the arts. The writer was also only one of two faculty members for the high school who served on the high school parent advisory board.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation that needed improvement was the political effectiveness of the parents' music advocacy group and the promotion of its educational ideas.

This high school parents' group did not have the organization to be effective advocates for their children's music education.

The high school parents' music support group had not been able to show any coalition as a unified organization in proposing specific tours, fund raising and other projects which required school board approval.

Problem Documentation

During the previous year a small political faction of the Choral Arts Association (parents' group) successfully interfered

with a proposal approved by 90% of its membership concerning a trip to Europe for the choir. The Board of Education indicated at a study session that they would approve the proposal; however, at the board meeting a week later, the Board tabled the proposal due to the intervention of two politically astute parents.

Causative Analysis

Parents were not organized. Parents were not aware of the political options and empowerment of parent organizations. The board could be swayed by politically strong individuals and the presentation of parents' ideas were not formulated well.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature dealt with the issue of parent involvement. Parents who empowered themselves effected change (Rice, 1992). In schools where parents were inactive or invisible, it was not accidental, but rather intended by either the administration or the teacher (Dismuke, 1991). Students were more likely to succeed with parental involvement (Loucks, 1992).

Loucks, instructor at Southern Illinois University, pointedly stated that the key issue was communication between the parent and the classroom. Loucks examined research that showed that parent involvement in the school resulted in improved student achievement. Loucks viewed the entire school as a place of "community" involvement and singled out booster groups such as music, as imperative to successful school operation (Loucks, 1992).

Hoffer presented an interesting argument for working with parents' music groups as they attempted to meet certain educational needs through field trips that required extensive fund raising. However, his argument was not well conceived. His initial premise was faulty in that he stated that the main purposes of a concert tour was to recruit students and reward students. He went on to state that for performances at Disneyland and the like that there was only a small percentage of actual music education taking place (Hoffer, 1992). He neglected to discuss parent supported and initiated projects concerned with tours as "life experiences" that could take place in concert theatres such as Carnegie Hall (New York), the Kennedy Center

(Washington) or world class halls in Europe.

If educators did not take the first step to set a friendly and open relationship between parents and school, the first meeting between parents and school would be initiated by parents and would probably be hostile. Most parents needed a "cause" to become actively involved. A school/parent relationship built during the resolution of single issue oftentimes would serve as a springboard for the settlement of other mutually shared concerns (Coleman, 1991).

Arts advocacy, in part, was accomplished through acquiring key community people to act as emissaries for promotion of the arts by having those individuals speak to various active fraternal, community and special interest organizations. The objective was to stir awareness for the arts through networking (Goldfarb, 1979).

Werner developed a lobbying effort through a parent's music organization. They contacted business and community leaders for financial support. Werner advocated the visibility of music students through performance opportunities at community functions

to assist parents in their solicitation for financial support (Werner, 1988).

Stouffer, former associate principal of Pleasant Valley Community High School in Iowa and a doctoral student in administration at the University of Iowa, wrote that secondary school instructors and superiors did not take into account the advantages of using parents within the educational structure. Stouffer went on to illustrate the crucial need to bring parents into the fold, yet stated that it required little effort to do so (Stouffer, 1992).

Parents who assisted the instructor and the children in the classroom set an environment for accelerated learning (Jackson, 1993).

Parents made a positive difference when educators opened lines of communication with parents concerning various educational needs regarding not only classroom activities, but with application to broader operations of school management (Carlson, 1991).

Schools did not take the initiative to involve parents, and in fact purposely maintained a wall between them and the school

(Dismuke, 1991).

Educators were reluctant to give up management control. In the classroom setting or administratively, parents were not allowed to assume meaningful roles (Dixon, 1992).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The primary goal was to see the Choral Arts Association take steps to become an organized, political, and effective "parents as advocates" group through active participation within the parents' organizational structure, other district and school related committees and through music lobbying efforts in the community.

Expected Outcomes

By using a survey/questionnaire form, "Parent Survey On Personal Involvement For The School," as an evaluation tool developed by the writer and the president of the Choral Arts Association, the writer expected to effectively mobilize 35 of the 60 parents into five specific areas of arts advocacy and participation: (1) lobbying, networking and leadership, (2) participation in fund raising activities, (3) participation

through attendance, (4) assistance in concert or tour arrangements, (5) assistance with daily tasks of music director.

The end result would show heightened activity of parents involved in choral music education as well as productive activity through other political school networks.

Measurement of Outcome

The writer was to measure the participation outcomes in two categories by using the instrument stated in the outcome statement. The Parent Survey On Personal Involvement For The School was an evaluation instrument to be used by the writer. The instrument (1) tracked the number of participatory hours and (2) tracked parent participation in five activity categories. Every activity for the parents was listed in the survey and was noted with participation hours. For purposes of this problem-solving experience, tracking and tallying of participatory hours and individual activity participation in each specific area created the foundation of statistical information for evaluation.

The evaluation outcomes were to be based on the information gathered from last year's and this year's tallies as recorded

through the evaluation instrument's categorization.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The parents from Arlington Heights, Illinois found solutions to major music curriculum problems when their entire music program was cut from the curriculum. Because funds supporting the program were no longer budgeted, the music parents developed a funding system to continue music education independent from the school (Rice, 1979). The demonstration to raise funds on a grand scale was enveloped in her report. Rice also illustrated the point that parents became a powerful organization when they saw a need.

Coleman concluded that some educators purposely leave parents out of the picture. He went on to state that it became the parents' responsibility to confront the institution's authority by demanding their rights to become part of the process (Coleman, 1991).

Jackson and Cooper reported on a school in New York City

where the principal after seeing the benefits of direct faculty and parent interaction and intervention implemented a position to exclusively work with parents and parent involvement in school projects (Jackson, 1993). The conclusion was that more parents who were involved promoted a healthier school environment and actually assisted in attaining school and pupil goals.

Dixon wrote that educators at all levels must relinquish their omnipotent authority status and begin to consider the strength of a shared position involving students, parents and community (Dixon, 1992). In essence, Dixon was speaking of policy making from the bottom up, not from the top to the bottom.

Equally important as the movement of parents' groups becoming more organized and preparing more logical presentations is that school boards needed to be more receptive to "life experiences" concepts for children when parents promoted these ideas to the district. Many school districts needed to look at reversing their "servitude attitude" by acknowledging the importance of input delivered from the bottom to top and recognizing that with having higher authority, came, then, the responsibility to more diligently serve, rather than expecting to be gratified by those

to whom they were presumed to attend.

Through a developed list of responsibilities and opportunities for parents to become involved in their school, parents assumed a higher level of expectation for themselves to improve the school environment for their children (Fairley, 1993).

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The writer prepared and presented ideas and examples of successful advocacy groups for this parents' group, and worked together with the officers of the group to find direction. According to the research, successful parents' advocacy began with an interest or cause. The premise was accepted that if an organizational structure were formed, the parents' group would have a better chance with becoming empowered to accomplish more for their children.

The writer requested parents' opinions to determine a direction that they might wish to take as a group. The writer provided expertise in developing promotional and marketing skills. The writer allowed the parents to determine their own path as individual education advocates. It was important for the

group to support a "cause" for the purpose of focus, namely, a major tour for the choir that required organizational skills.

Report of Action Taken

The first step was to contact the president of the parents' group and set up a meeting with all the choir parents. The president and the writer prepared a list of "involvement" activities for consideration of individual parents. At the first meeting, the president led the presentation, but allowed the writer to elaborate on concepts and possible direction. The writer introduced goals for the parents' group to consider as well as goals for the choral organization. Conveyed to the parents group were the results of previous research that had indicated that parent empowerment required persistent and aggressive action. It was explained that the greatest successes to motivate parents had been the ability for parents to rally around a cause.

In a discussion that immediately followed during the meeting, it was evident that the parents' enraged emotion over the previous year's defeat of a tour to Vienna and performance for the Pope in Vatican City remained. Ninety percent of the returning

parents had supported the tour and were surprised by the board of education's failure to approve their proposal. The parents' organization later discovered that a handful of parents from the organization designed a successful plan to discretely subvert their dreams for their children. The writer and the president of the group introduced a political agenda. The agenda included a calendar of events and activities for parent involvement. The president requested volunteers in each category. The parents signed up in areas where they thought that they might be able to contribute.

During the ensuing week, the president and the writer prepared a list in the following categories:

a. Lobbying, networking and assuming leadership responsibilities
b. participating in fund raising
c. participating through attendance at parents' meeting, board meetings and committee meetings
d. assisting in concert and tour arrangements
e. assisting with daily tasks of director.

Following a mailing of the results of the activity intentions of the parents' group, a second meeting was held. Volunteered assignments were designated to parents for activities for implementation of participation.

During the initial organization of the fund raising activities, the parents' group experienced two major breakthroughs in community awareness of the choir's impending tour. In the first situation, one parent who had taken the responsibility of securing air flight arrangements made contact with a locally based major airline for special concessions in using that airline. The airline responded by announcing that they would be the choir's "official" sponsor. With that came discounted fares and some free seats as well a state-wide promotion. In the second instance, the writer and the president prepared a letter for a national grocery chain with a locally based store requesting an altered method of using a gift certificate program in their store. The letter was personally hand delivered to the manager. The store saw the gift certificate program as an opportunity to promote school/community relations and approved the concept. Both activities received media attention in two newspapers and on television.

Chairpersons were designated for particular projects in fund raising. Two parents and the director began serving on the high school parent advisory council.

By the end of the first month of implementation, a preliminary proposal was written by the officers for the choir trip. Parents were assisting the director in areas of media promotion and with presentations to the students. Those activities included preparing programs, filing, coordination of information between school and home, and choir uniform distribution.

During the fifth and sixth week, a formal proposal was written for the school board. Parents lobbied board members and the administration. The parents and the director began networking within the community by contacting key support people after the news articles were released.

By the end of the second month, parents contacted and recruited other parents who had not yet participated in activities to attend next meeting. Parent volunteers continued to attend high school parent advisory committee and other district committee meetings.

A third meeting with parents' group was held. A status report of progress on lobbying and network efforts, fund raising and the tour proposal was presented. Input on strategies variation was given. The idea of running a cable television telethon was discussed and approved to take place. The theme would be "Ten Years: A Choir Retrospect." The program would include excerpts of previous television coverage and concert programs.

At the beginning of the third month, tour arrangements for hotels, food, side trips and transportation in Washington were confirmed. Parents assisted in arrangements and promotion of a choir concert which raised additional funds. Information was sent to editors of newspapers concerning the excellence of the music department and honor of participation in Washington. A downside to their effort was the continuous concern with raising enough money. Toward the end the project, the parents' group realized that they needed to do more in order to alleviate large family contributions. The parents were resilient. Through a local non-profit organization that hosted major league baseball during spring training, one of the parents made arrangements for

the choir students to "prepare" the stadium and to "work" the baseball games. The students raised their final $7,000 through this activity.

The parents were put in a position to contend with the same opponents of the choir as the previous year. The parents, through lobbying the school board and by community networking and direct confrontation with those opponents, thwarted the effort of their adversaries.

During the third and final month of this problem-solving experience, the officers and director reviewed and wrote revisions for the final tour proposal and presented the proposal to the school board with parents in attendance. The board of education unanimously approved the field trip.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The outcomes exceeded expectations. Fifty-five parents participated in some way to the success of the group's goals. Fifty parents were active in school activities relating to the choral music program compared to thirty-three parents involved in school choral activities from the previous year. From other records, such as meeting attendance and observation, five other parents were added to the current year's list of participants. From the parent survey, the total number of parent hours of participation in school choral activities during the three-month time of the practicum was 846 hours compared to 358 hours for a nine-month period last year. Significantly noted, the ratio of parent hours per month for the current year of the practicum implementation is 282 hours per month compared to 40 hours per month in the previous year.

The parents indicated on the evaluation instrument during the recording of the evaluation the number of hours that they committed to last year's choir activities. A comparative analysis of those records together with the evaluation of the current year's activity records provided information for evaluation.

TABLE 1

Tabulation Form

Area of Participation	Previous Year's Hours (9 Months)	Current Hours (3 Months)
1. Lobbying, leadership	35	83
2. Fund raising	81	368
3. Attendance	223	355
4. Tour/concert arrangements	17	50
5. Assisted Director	2	10
TOTALS IN HOURS	358	846

COMMENT:

Monthly parental activity in all areas increased from 40 hours per month during the previous year to 282 hours per month during the period of practicum implementation.

The evaluation tool, sign-in sheets, and other records indicated the previous year's activity: (Category 1) Three parents lobbied board members or solicited support from the community. Two parents officers of the organization provided leadership. Five parents actively participated in goal activities for the choir. (Category 2) Ten parents participated in fund raising. (Category 3) Thirty-three parents attended concerts. Twelve parents attended two parents' meetings last year. (Category 4) Five parents actively participated in concert preparation or supervision throughout the school term. Thirty-two of forty parents responded to written communications from the director concerning tour activities. (Category 5) No parents assisted director with classroom activities.

During the implementation period of the practicum (Category 1), eleven parents lobbied board members or solicited support from the community. Four parent officers of the organization provided leadership. Eighteen parents actively participated in goal activities for the choir. (Category 2) Twenty-five parents participated in fund raising. (Category 3) Forty-eight of the fifty respondents (parents) attended concerts. Fifty parents

attended at least one meeting this year. (Category 4) Thirteen parents actively participated in concert preparation or supervision. From other records, fifty-five of fifty-eight parents responded to written communications from the director concerning tour activities. (Category 5) Three parents assisted director with classroom activities.

A primary goal of the practicum was for the parents' organization to be successful in influencing decisions concerning their children. The organization oversaw the fund raising of $40,000 for the tour.

A parents' telephone tree was implemented to speed communication of needed action and information dissemination. That proved to be an invaluable link to parents between scheduled monthly meetings.

Two parents and the choir director gained positions on the high school parent advisory committee whose primary responsibility was to deliver recommendations and suggestions to the principal for consideration by the school board. One parent has decided to consider running for a school board position in the next election.

Unexpected results included: (1) The participation of a major airline endorsing itself as an "official" sponsor of the choir. With that came some free seats, discounted prices and State-wide promotion of the choir; (2) A national grocery chain locally sponsored a fund raising promotion that produced nearly $5,000 for the choir; (3) The small, but vocal coalition of opponents were overwhelmed by the parents' aggressive campaign; (4) The board of education not only unanimously approved the choir tour, but sponsored full payment for four of five chaperons and a board member to travel with the choir; (5) A local community organization raised over $6,000 for the choir; (6) Best of all, the intense drive of the parents became an infectious contributor to a better focussed, disciplined and musical choir ensemble. The choir was rated as one of the top two choirs in the national competition by the American Choral Directors Association's adjudication. Together with newspaper and other media exposure during the campaign, the choir was the "talk of the town."

Discussion

The literature review indicated numerous times that when

parents take the initiative in presenting solutions to school problems, they are heard. Recalling from an early reference, Werner developed a lobbying effort through a parent's music organization. That group contacted business and community leaders for financial support. Werner advocated the visibility of music students through performance opportunities at community functions to assist parents in their solicitation for financial support (Werner, 1988). The parents in this problem-solving experience followed that information explicitly and developed a "telethon" fund raiser on the community/school television network.

Parents who assisted the instructor and the children in the classroom set an environment for accelerated learning (Jackson, 1993). Loucks examined research that showed that parent involvement in the school resulted in improved student achievement. Loucks viewed the entire school as a place of "community" involvement and singled out booster groups such as music, as imperative to successful school operation (Loucks, 1992). Concentration and education increased for the students in situations when parents and community members were visible in the classroom setting.

Arts advocacy, in part, was accomplished through acquiring key community people to act as emissaries for promotion of the arts by having those individuals speak to various active fraternal, community and special interest organizations. The objective was to stir awareness for the arts through networking (Goldfarb, 1979). Members of the local organization which raised over $6,000 for the choir were community people who were the choir's finest emissaries.

Maintaining a sense of mission was most important to the parents. They were determined not to be defeated by the few parents who opposed extensive educational trips. Several parents through their lobbying efforts with members of the board of education were able to assist the board's membership in understanding that the majority of parents were interested in supporting the choir tour to Washington.

Parent empowerment was effective in dealing with administrators and other community members. Taking a choir trip is a small item on an education agenda. However, from having experienced resounding defeat in one year to relishing in a victory for their children the next, brought to the parents the

knowledge of situational control that parents have when they rally behind a cause. Whether that cause is large or small, when a parents' organization is determined through proper planning and preparation to seek resolution on their children's behalf, one can forecast positive results through persistent action.

The concerted effort by parents generated by enthusiasm, but placed through a logical design, did infuse upon the school administrators the need for open dialogue with parents.

Students, when supported by their parents, usually succeed. Parents, when supported by their peers, have the power to lead and become agents of change.

Recommendations

It is very clear from the results of this report that a cause rallied parents and successfully brought an issue to resolution. It was found that the community will financially support a worthwhile activity or educational experience. One can view this practicum project with some reservation in that the activity does not seem to be far-reaching. It is a high school choir requesting an extended field trip. However, the message is

not as superficial. In education, small miracles happen everyday in nearly every class room across the country. It may be a first grade student suddenly understanding phonics, or a third grade student latching on to the multiplication tables. For this writer, it is the advent of parent empowerment in our educational systems. If all of the doors of the school are not open to parents, then, parents must be given access, or use their own means to break down the barriers placed between parent and child.

The project proceeded exactly on cue. (Step 1) One must first have commitment from the parents. (Step 2) The instructor should pose issues of substance to address and as well as various options of resolution to pursue. (3) A plan must be presented that encompasses a comprehensive campaign. The entire group must be kept informed as they proceed. (4) An organization must rally support from the administration and the community by putting the issue in the public eye through media attention. (5) Do not take a confrontational stand unless absolutely necessary. (6) The idea is to muster a broad base of support from which to act. That type of support will squash most opponents. (7) In determining your opponents, one needs to keep in mind that some of the nay-sayers

are within your parents' group. Those parents need to be approached differently because as opponents, they have another agenda. That means that they must be excluded from rudimentary planning, but brought on board after firm strategies are formed.

Dissemination

An outline discussing music parents' empowerment with this practicum as a basis of information has been written and submitted with the anticipated publication of an article for the Arizona State Music Journal. The national MENC Music Journal has been sent a similar outline and the editors are interested in the final results for a possible article addressing parent advocacy in the arts. Parent advocacy will be part of a local television presentation to be aired in May centering on the high school choir trip to Washington, D. C.

References

Campbell, L. (1992). Parents and schools working for student success. NASSP Bulletin. 76(543). 1-4.

Carlson, Carol G. (1991). Getting parents involved in their children's education. The Education Digest. 57(3). 10-12.

Coleman, James S. (1991). A federal report on parental involvement in education. The Education Digest. 57(3). 3-5.

Dismuke, D. (1991). Are we patronizing parents? NEA Today. 9(9). 4-5.

Dixon, Armendia P. (1992). Parents: full partners in the decision-making process. NASSP Bulletin. 76(543). 15-19.

Elfer P. (1992). A view from the outside. The Times Educational-Supplement. 3960. 22.

Fairley, R. (1993, July). Parents: total quality advocates. Lecture presented at the Summer Educational Institute for Nova University, Washington, D. C.

Goldfarb, Roz (1979). The art and politics of arts advocacy. Art Education. 32(5). 22-23.

Hoffer, Charles R. (1992). Funding and philosophy: a conversation about band trips and fund raising. NASSP Bulletin. 76(544). 17-26.

Jackson, Barbara L. and Cooper, Bruce S. (1993). Involving parents in urban high schools. Education Digest. 58(8). 27-32.

Loucks, H. (1992). Increasing parent involvement in schools: a factor in successful schools. NASSP Bulletin. 76(543). 19-24.

Rice, W. (1979). After the music program went flat, these parents orchestrated a nonprofit corporation to restore harmony. American School Board Journal. 166(12). 40-41.

Stouffer, B. (1992). We can increase parent involvement in secondary schools. NASSP Bulletin. 76(543). 5-9.

Werner, Gene C. (1988). Joining forces with the arts community. Music Educators Journal. 75(4). 46-49.

APPENDIX

PARENT SURVEY ON PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

Parent Survey On Personal Involvement For The School

Please indicate on the line, the number of participatory hours and circle specific activities with which you were involved during the choir tour campaign over the past 3 months. Make comments where appropriate. Complete comparative analysis on back page. Thank you.

1. Lobbying, networking and leadership. _____ hours

   a. Lobbied board members and administration concerning trip
   b. Recruited two parents to attend a CAA meeting
   c. Contacted media concerning choir department (letter to the editor or a phone call)
   d. Contacted key community people about choir activities
   e. Served on high school parent advisory committee
   f. Served on other district committee (budget, etc.)
   g. Considering to run for school board membership

2. Fund raising. _____ hours

   a. Served as fund raising chair
   b. Personally raised funds (includes solicitation of funds from community)
   c. Served as a fund raiser student supervisor

3. Participated through attendance. _____ hours

   a. Attended at least one choir rehearsal
   b. Attended CAA meeting(s)
   c. Attended board meeting where the school acted on proposal

4. Assisted in concert or tour arrangements. _____ hours

   a. Assisted in one or more of the following tour arrangements: hotels, food, side trips, transportation, coordination of activities
   b. Provided input for the writing of the tour proposal
   c. Assisted director in writing the tour proposal
   d. Planned to be a chaperon on the field trip
   e. Assisted in ticket sales for local concerts
   f. Assisted at the concert with student supervision
   g. Assisted with other concert arrangements

5. Assisted with daily tasks of choir director. _____ hours

   a. Preparing programs
   b. Filing
   c. Tutorial work
   d. Coordinated information between students and parents
   e. Choir uniform supervision
   f. Other needs

Comparative Analysis

How many hours do you estimate that you worked last year for the choir; then transfer hours from first page:

Lobbying, networking and leadership. _____ hours

(from first page) _____ hours

Fund raising. _____ hours

(from first page) _____ hours

Participated through attendance _____ hours

(from first page) _____ hours

Assisted in concert or tour arrangements _____ hours

(from first page) _____ hours

Assisted with daily tasks of choir director _____ hours

(from first page) _____ hours

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Total hours (to be compiled by director)

LAST YEAR'S HOURS_____ CURRENT YEAR'S HOURS_____